



SL/25-4-d-8

61:355











U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION.

No. 69.

---

STATEMENT

OF

THE OBJECT AND METHODS

OF THE

SANITARY COMMISSION,

Appointed by the Government of the United States, June 13, 1861.

---

PUBLISHED BY ITS DIRECTION.



NEW YORK:

WM. C. BRYANT & Co., PRINTERS, 41 NASSAU STREET, CORNER OF LIBERTY.

1863.



ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS  
LIBRARY

CLASS	61:355
ACON.	3527
SOURCE	
DATE	

REF

At the last session of the Sanitary Commission, at Washington, a resolution was adopted "That the subject of an appeal to the public for funds be referred to a Committee consisting of the Standing Committee and the members of the Commission residing at Philadelphia and Boston." This Committee submits the following statement.

823 Broadway, New York, Dec. 7, 1863.



# SANITARY COMMISSION.

---

NO. 69.

---

The Sanitary Commission was created by Government in June, 1861.

Like every other organ of our National energies it has been steadily gaining strength ever since that time. The resources that have been put at its disposal, and the work it has been enabled to do, far exceed the most sanguine hopes of its founders. Its aggregate receipts (including the money value of supplies sent to its depots) are believed to exceed the income of any other benevolent organization, American or Foreign, during the same period.

The objects of this paper are, first, to state what has been done with these great public benefactions; and, secondly, to enable the People to determine whether it will or will not promote the National cause, by enabling the Commission to continue and extend its efforts.

A large portion of its resources has been expended on measures for the prevention of disease. Their result is necessarily negative and cannot be stated with certainty. The low rate of mortality from disease in our Armies has unquestionably been due in some degree to the warnings and labors of the Commission. But it is impossible to say how much other causes have contributed to it, or to distinguish their effects from those due to the work of the Commission.

It is certain that, in the summer of 1861, experienced Army officers predicted that malaria, camp fever and dysentery would within six months destroy fifty per cent. of the Volunteer Army

then assembling. What the Commission did to avert this calamity, will be stated hereafter, and must have contributed—under Divine favor—to save our Armies from the ravages of pestilence.

But it has done much work beside—with positive results that can be definitely stated. The value of this work is recognized by the Medical staff of the Army, and in Orders published by prominent General officers, East and West.\* Its direct and tan-

\* DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTH, HEADQUARTERS IN THE FIELD, }  
Morris Island, S. C., Sept. 9, 1863.

GENERAL ORDERS, No. 73.—The Brigadier-General commanding desires to make this public acknowledgment of the benefits for which his command has been indebted to the United States Sanitary Commission, and to express his thanks to the gentlemen whose humane efforts in procuring and distributing much-needed articles of comfort have so materially alleviated the sufferings of the soldier.

Especial gratitude is due to Dr. M. M. MARSH, Medical Inspector of the Commission, through whose efficiency, energy and zeal, the wants of the troops have been promptly ascertained, and the resources of the Commission made available for every portion of the army. By order of

Brigadier-General Q. A. GILLMORE.

ED. W. SMITH, Asst. Adjutant-General.

Official: ISRAEL S. SEALY, Capt. Forty-seventh N. Y. Volunteers, Acting Asst. Adjutant-General.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE CUMBERLAND, }  
Murfreesboro, Feb. 2, 1863.

The General commanding presents his warmest acknowledgments to the friends of the soldiers of this army, whose generous sympathy with the suffering of the sick and wounded, has induced them to send for their comfort numerous sanitary supplies which are continually arriving by the hands of individuals and charitable societies. While he highly appreciates and does not undervalue the charities which have been lavished on this army, experience has demonstrated the importance of system and impartiality, as well as judgment and economy, in the forwarding and distribution of these supplies. In all these respects the United States Sanitary Commission stands unrivaled. Its organization, experience, and large facilities for the work, are such that the General does not hesitate to recommend, in the most urgent manner, all those who desire to send sanitary supplies to confide them to the care of this Commission.

They will thus insure the supplies reaching their destination without wastage or expense of agents or transportation, and their being distributed in a judicious

gible results are many thousand lives saved, an incalculable amount of suffering relieved or mitigated, smallpox and scurvy checked in camps and hospitals by cargoes of vegetables, and by timely supplies of vaccine—and succor, comfort and relief freely given to hundreds of thousands when they could be obtained from no other source. What the People have thus done for their soldiers will long be held in honorable remembrance as a magnificent National act, not only of humanity and charity, but of Patriotism also, for by preventing disease and speeding convalescence, it has materially strengthened the National forces, contributed to the success of the National cause, and added a certain number of thousand bayonets to the available strength of the Army during every month of the past two years.

This is the great object for which the Commission exists. Its work is, in the highest degree, humane and charitable, for it visits and relieves the sick, destitute, and miserable. But its ultimate end is neither humanity nor charity. It is to economise for the National service the life and strength of the National soldier. The Commission works in a spirit and on a system as practical as that of the War Department, and it submits the value of its system and its work to the practical common sense with which the People decide on whatever concerns the public interest.

It asks the confidence and support of patriotic and far-sighted men on two special grounds. One is the nationality and catholicity of its work as compared with that of State and local or-

manner, without disorder or interference with the regulations and usages of the army.

This Commission acts in full concert with the Medical Department of the Army, and enjoys its confidence. It is thus enabled with a few agents to do a large amount of good at the proper time. Ever since the Battle of Stones' River, it has distributed a surprisingly large amount of clothing, lint, bandages and bedding, as well as milk, concentrated beef, fruit, and other sanitary stores, essential to the recovery of the sick and wounded.

W. S. ROSECRANS, Major-General Commanding Department.



ganizations. Not a word of censure or of disrespect should be spoken of these agencies. Many of them do great good within their own sphere. But their sphere is provincial, not National, and their object is the relief of some single class of National soldiers, to the exclusion of all others. They assist men, not because they now belong to the National army, but because they formerly belonged to some particular State, county, or neighborhood. This distinction between their avowed object and that of the United States Sanitary Commission should be clearly understood.

The Commission studiously ignores sections and State lines, and knows soldiers from Missouri or from Massachusetts only as in the National Service. It declines all contributions for the exclusive benefit of a single class, and impartially applies its resources, received from East or West, to the aid and relief of the National Army East and West, asking only where they are most sorely needed. It is thus daily teaching thousands a practical lesson on the blessings of National Unity, which will not be forgotten when they return to the duties of civil life. The Maryland or Illinois volunteer who has been rescued from misery and the prospect of death, by clothing, food, stimulants and chloroform, that came to him on the field or in some ill-provided hospital, through the Commission, from some remote corner of New England or Pennsylvania, is likely for the rest of his days to think of himself less as a Marylander or as a Western man, and more as a citizen of the United States; and though he will not value his State less, he will love his country more. Even rebel prisoners, helped through their sickness and destitution by the stores of the Sanitary Commission, carry back to their Southern homes new and enlarged views as to the resources and the generosity of the People against which they have fought under coercion, or misled by systematic falsehood.

The Commission seeks to direct the overflowing sympathy of

the People with the Army into a National channel. It calls on the women of New England to clothe soldiers at Alexandria and Chattanooga, and on the West to aid the Army at New Orleans or Port Royal, wherever supplies are most wanted or can be most economically carried. Its influence on its contributors is no less National than on its beneficiaries. That of local or State agencies tends to foster, in contributor, agent and beneficiary alike, the very spirit of sectionalism and "*State-ish-ness*" to which we owe all our troubles.

The Commission is, moreover, the only organization for Army relief, local or general, that works on a system carefully conformed and subordinated to that of the Army, and through agents specially trained and permanently employed. The objection that has been made to its employing permanent salaried officers, instead of unpaid volunteers, giving a fortnight or a month each, to the work of Army relief, is untenable and short sighted. It has to distribute millions of dollars worth of bulky stores over an area of many thousand square miles. This is, in a merely business point of view, a work of serious magnitude. It is, moreover, a work of special delicacy and difficulty, because it must be so done as not to interfere with the machinery of the Army, or weaken the reliance of the men upon their officers. Without a corps of agents who understand their work, give their whole time to it, and are bound to perform definite service during a definite period, loss, waste, and misapplication of supplies are inevitable. This branch of the Commission's work may fairly be compared with that of our largest railroads and express companies, and is at least as worthy of being well and economically done. But how long would any railroad corporation keep out of the hands of a Receiver, if it confided its freight business to volunteers over whom it could exercise no real control, and who felt themselves at full liberty to leave its service whenever they tired of it, or when-

ever they thought themselves overworked or unfairly criticised, instead of employing superintendents, clerks, and porters, engaged in the usual way and on the usual terms? The poetry of the Relief Agent's work may be spoiled if he receive a salary, but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, its practical value to the Army is doubled. It would be easy to name splendid exceptions to this rule, but they are only exceptions.

The work of Army relief, like every other practical and serious business, requires skill which can be got only by experience, and men cannot, as a general rule, be secured for service long enough to acquire experience and skill, unless they receive moderate pay. But the difference between a skilled and an unskilled agent is equal to a difference of at least fifty per cent. in the amount of practical good each can do the soldier with the stores entrusted to him, and it costs the Commission less than two per cent. on the estimated value of its supplies to distribute them through skilled salaried agents, instead of unskilled volunteers. This is not all. The volunteer is necessarily unacquainted with the complex regulations under which Government supplies the wants of the Army, for thorough familiarity with their practical working can be acquired only by months of actual contact and experience. He cannot tell, therefore, when called upon to relieve a Regiment or a Hospital, whether its officers have done or have neglected their duty, and whether they can or cannot promptly obtain what is needed through regular official channels. His impulses prompt him of course instantly to relieve the suffering he sees before him. He distributes his supplies at once, asking no questions, and goes home thankful that he has been enabled to relieve so much destitution and distress. But he has too often been merely covering up the short-comings of some inefficient Officer paid by Government to do precisely the same thing, and has thus shielded him from

exposure and dismissal, and done the Army in the long run more harm than good.

The Commission avoids this danger. It reserves its supplies for the cases of accidental failure, which must from time to time occur in the working of every military system, and especially of one newly organized on so vast a scale as ours, and seeks rather to strengthen the official agencies through which Government provides for the army, than to set itself up as a rival source of supply, and thus weaken the confidence of the men in their military superiors.

#### FINANCES OF THE COMMISSION.

The Treasurer of the Commission has received in cash from his appointment, in June, 1861, up to and including December 7th, 1863 :

From Maine .....	\$17,720 33
“ New Hampshire.....	1,701 44
“ Vermont .....	2,035 15
“ Massachusetts .....	48,548 86
“ Connecticut.....	5,181 35
“ Rhode Island.....	8,068 30
“ New England (States not discriminated).....	6,683 75
“ New York.....	160,042 58
“ New Jersey.....	3,170 88
“ Pennsylvania .....	11,699 18
“ Delaware .....	765 00
“ Maryland .....	1,733 00
“ Washington, D. C.....	2,333 08
“ Ohio .....	2,700 00
“ Michigan.....	578 00
“ Illinois.....	546 25
“ Kentucky .....	6,166 45



From Indiana .....	500 00
“ Minnesota .....	45 00
“ Nevada Territory.....	54,144 75
“ California .....	526,909 61
“ Oregon .....	26,450 78
“ Washington Territory.....	7,258 97
“ Idaho .....	2,110 46
“ Vancouvers and San Juan Islands.....	2,552 68
“ Honolulu.....	4,085 00
“ Santiago de Chili.....	3,688 84
“ Peru.....	2,002 00
“ Newfoundland .....	150 00
“ Canada .....	439 48
“ England and Scotland.....	1,150 00
“ France.....	2,750 00
“ Turkey.....	50 00
“ China .....	2,303 93
“ Cuba.....	23 00
“ Unknown sources.....	3,192 88
<hr/>	
Making in the whole the sum of.....	\$919,580 98

Large amounts have been raised by the Branches of the Commission beside their contributions to its Central Treasury, included in the foregoing statement. The money receipts of the Philadelphia branch for instance, over and above what it has contributed to the general Treasury, up to December 4th, 1863, have been \$117,097 75.

These local receipts have been expended chiefly in the purchase of supplies forwarded to the depots of the Commission at Washington, Louisville, Morris Island, New Orleans, &c., or to its relief agents in the field, and in the local work of Special Relief.

To the large amounts thus raised at our principal cities, must be added the aggregate of the smaller sums which innumerable societies, "sewing circles," and other patriotic organizations affiliated with the Commission or its various branches have spent in the purchase of material to be converted into Hospital clothing, and for other like purposes. This aggregate may never be precisely ascertained, but it doubtless far exceeds what has been received by the Branches and the Central Treasury together.

There must also be taken into account the value of the transportation given the Commission for its bulky stores, either freely or at greatly reduced rates, by Railroad and Express Companies, and of the free use it enjoys of many of our Telegraph lines. These are equivalent to so much money saved its treasury for the benefit of the Army, through public confidence in its efficiency and National scope. This amount can only be estimated at present, but it is immense. On two Western Railroads alone, it is understood to exceed two hundred thousand dollars.

The money value of the material supplies dispensed by the Commission will be considered hereafter. Leaving them out of view, it is evident that the public bounty it has organized and directed in aid of the National Army must be estimated in terms of millions.

But it enjoys the confidence also of the Military authorities. Having been ever on its guard against the danger (inherent in all attempts to aid the Army through outside unofficial agencies,) of weakening the sense of responsibility among officers, and interfering with discipline among the rank and file, it is known to Military and Medical officers as an auxiliary on which they can call with entire safety. It has, therefore, as a general rule, the benefit of their cordial co-operation. The economical value of their assistance, especially in all field operations, is inestimable. It often makes all the difference between life-saving success and

utter waste and failure. Quartermasters feel authorized to help forward supplies entrusted to the recognized agents of the Commission when they decline giving facilities to unknown and irresponsible relief agents. After a great battle such transportation cannot be bought with money, though the lives of thousands may depend upon it, and the lives of many thousands have been saved because help was sent them through the Sanitary Commission, and because the system of the Commission is known to harmonize with that of the Army.

The confidence thus reposed in the Commission economizes its resources in many other ways, and enables it to use them with special advantage and effect. For instance, Government supplies ordinary rations to the hundreds of thousands of men who are relieved in the "Homes" of the Commission. It often furnishes transportation, guards for depots and for wagon trains, and details of men for special service in aid of the Commission.\* Without this help the "Special Relief" system, which has done what no Government system could undertake, and what we could not have endured to see left undone, would have cost four-fold what it has. The special advantages thus secured to the Commission through the confidence reposed in it by the Public

---

\* HEAD-QUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE CUMBERLAND, }  
 STEVENSON, ALA., August 19th, 1863, }

Sir,—The General commanding authorizes the use of half a car daily for the shipment of sanitary stores by the United States Sanitary Commission, from Nashville to such points South as may be desired. This letter, if exhibited to the Quarter-Master at Nashville, will procure you the transportation at all times, unless the exigencies of the service should make it necessary temporarily to suspend the permission. *General* directions to ship nothing but government stores, will not affect this permit. Should it be necessary to suspend it, *special* direction will be given.

I am, very respectfully,  
 Your obedient servant,

C. GODDARD,  
*Lieut. Col. and A. A. G.*

Dr. A. N. REED,  
*U. S. Sanitary Commission.*

and by the Army, make every dollar contributed to its Treasury do the work of two.

Though the resources controlled by the Commission have been very large, its work has demanded them all. It has repeatedly been obliged to purchase supplies, after its depots were exhausted, for tens of thousands of wounded men. This includes rebel prisoners in our hands, for it has been found practically impossible to pass by on the other side when any citizen of the United States was suffering from the casualties of war.

The disbursements of the Central Treasury for the eight months ending December 1st, 1863, have been as follows:—

April.....	\$29,142 57
May.....	36,315 09
June.....	54,623 21
July.....	92,020 86
August.....	40,507 07
September.....	28,470 35
October.....	30,191 81
November.....	49,845 87
	<hr/>
	\$361,116 83

or on an average a little over forty-five thousand dollars a month.

#### GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMISSION.

The Commission meets at Washington quarterly, and holds special sessions whenever they are required. During the intervals between its sessions its affairs are administered by its chief executive officer, the General Secretary, and by a standing committee of five of its members, which meets daily in New York.

Two "Associate Secretaries" are stationed one at Louisville and a second at Washington. The former is charged with the work of the Commission west of the Alleghanies, the latter east



—including our positions on the Rebel Seaboard, and the city of New Orleans. These Associate Secretaries have the supervision of all Sanitary Inspectors, Relief Agents, &c., within their respective departments, receive constant reports from them, and direct their labors wherever comparison of these reports indicates that they are most wanted. Each is in communication also with the Branches of the Commission, and through them with the local Societies that send their stores to the branch and central depots and makes requisitions for these stores from time to time as they are needed. In case of pressing emergency he purchases supplies or calls by telegraph for their purchase at the point from which they can be most speedily forwarded.

Each Associate Secretary is thus kept informed of the *relative* wants, of every regiment within his department, and as to the particular depots from which supplies of any particular class can be most promptly and economically forwarded. No State Agent can thus view the whole national field. He may do great service, but he can never be quite sure that he would not have done the whole army and the whole country much more service if he had worked somewhere else.

The subordinate agents of the Commission are employed on duties which can mostly be classed under the heads of Sanitary Inspection, Army Relief, and Special Relief. They all report to one or the other of the two Associate Secretaries already mentioned, except the Inspectors. These report to a third Associate Secretary, who is also Chief of Sanitary Inspection.

There are several hundred "Associate members" of the Commission, selected as prominent and loyal citizens, or as experts in Sanitary science. Many of them have attended its sittings, and aided it with their counsel. Under their auspices the numerous Branches of the Commission have been established in our principal cities. These admirable and efficient organizations provide for the local work of Army relief, and raise funds and

secure supplies for the general objects of the Commission. Each has its own Treasurer.\*

The object of this paper is to state the work and the wants of the Commission itself, but it is impossible to pass over, without mention, the services rendered by its Branches. The final history of the Commission, and of the great popular movement of munificence and humanity that distinguishes this war from all others, will show how much these organizations at Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, New York,† Pittsburgh, Brooklyn, Cincinnati, Boston, and elsewhere, have done in addition to the work of the Central Commission. Without them the Commission would have been a comparative failure. The work of the Commission and of its branches cannot be so analyzed as to show exactly how much of the aggregate result should be credited to either. To attempt such analysis would overload this statement with details. But its readers must bear in mind, that the results it sets forth as accomplished "by the Commission," are in many cases largely due to the energy of its branches, the Commission itself acting merely as a balance-wheel to secure the harmony and the impartial Nationality of their work.

The financial centre of the Commission is at New York. Its Treasurer acts under the supervision of the Standing Committee, and makes no payments without its authority.

#### SANITARY INSPECTION OF CAMPS, POSTS, AND HOSPITALS.

This was the chief object contemplated by the Commission when it was created by Government. As has already been stated, our Armies were during the summer of 1861, in serious danger of destruction by epidemic disease. Modern Sanitary science was

---

\* See Appendix B.

† The Women's Central Association of Relief, New York.

hardly recognized in the ancient regulations of the Medical Bureau. Its officers could not be expected to go beyond the strict line of official duty when that duty was more than quadrupled. The first business of the Commission therefore was to awaken general attention to the Sanitary interests of the Army, and to do what it could to improve the Sanitary condition of camps, quarters, hospitals, and men.

It sent out Medical Inspectors forthwith to warn inexperienced officers of the peril to which filth, bad ventilation and bad food exposed their men and themselves. It brought to bear upon Government the influence of the medical profession throughout the country, effected the extension and invigoration of the Medical Bureau, and secured the express recognition of the prevention of disease, no less than its cure, as among the functions of the Medical Staff. Government now employs its own Sanitary Inspectors and does a certain portion of the preventive work which the Commission did during the first year of its existence. But the Commission still keeps up an Inspectorial Corps auxiliary to that of Government, for the latter is numerically unequal to its great work, and there are special causes beside that have thus far interfered with its efficiency.

Each Inspector on visiting a Camp or Post puts himself, in the first place, in communication with its Military authorities and asks their co-operation in his work. This being secured, he proceeds to investigate the condition of the men in every particular that bears on their liability to disease, and the sufficiency of the remedial agencies within their reach. He inquires into the quality of their water-supply, food, cooking and clothing—the ventilation and the cleanliness of their camp or quarters—the position of their latrines—the provision for the removal and destruction of refuse and offal—the equipment of their field or post hospital—their ambulance service—the competency of their medical officers—the salubrity or insalubrity of their



camp-site or post—the sufficiency of their bedding and blankets, the character of the diseases that have prevailed among them, and the precautions thus indicated. On these points he advises the medical and military authorities of the Corps as a Sanitary expert. His inspection generally discloses something that can be done to promote the health of the command. He finds, for instance, that there are tendencies to malarious disease that call for quinine as a prophylactic, or tendencies to scurvy, that require supplies of fresh vegetables, or that there is a deficiency of stimulants, bedding, articles of hospital diet, or disinfecting material. If the want, whatever it is, can be promptly supplied through the regular official channels, he sees that this is done—but if it cannot, or if (as is often the case) something is required which Government does not undertake to supply, he calls on the Relief Department of the Commission which supplies it according to its ability. If the officer who should obtain it be inexperienced in requisitions and supply-tables, the Inspector is able to assist him. If the defect arise from corruption or incapacity, he reports the fact. It sometimes happens that the health of a Camp is endangered by want, not of supplies, but of some work for which authority cannot at once be obtained. In this case money is appropriated by the Standing Committee, or in case of emergency by the Associate Secretary on the Inspector's report. The Commission has done much work of this class. It has improved the ventilation of hospitals, dug wells to improve the water-supply of camps, built temporary hospitals and quarters, to replace unwholesome and dangerous buildings, furnished and fitted up Hospital Transports and converted ordinary Railroad cars into Railroad Ambulances, with cooking apparatus and store rooms, and litters hung on springs, in which thousands of men with fractured limbs have travelled thousands of miles without suffering or injury.

The results of every Inspection are noted on blanks provided

for the purpose, and are severally reported. Each report covers about two hundred distinct points affecting the sanitary condition and wants of the force inspected. More than 1800 of these reports have been accumulated. They are digested and tabulated, as received, by a competent actuary. It is believed that the body of military and medical statistics thus collected is among the largest and most valuable in existence. It can hardly fail to furnish conclusions of the utmost importance to sanitary science.

The Commission employs other agencies also for the prevention of disease. It urges measures of sanitary reform on the attention of Government. It furnished material for the vaccination of thousands of men at a time, now happily past, when the Medical Bureau was unable to supply the tenth part of what was needed, and issued what it had only after a fortnight's delay. It has thus stayed the ravages of smallpox in regiments crowded on board transports, after that disease had actually begun to spread among their men.

It has done much beside to protect our soldiers against this peril. During the first year of the war, for instance, all cases of "eruptive disease" in one of our most important military departments were consigned indiscriminately to a single Hospital, from which men were "discharged cured" of mumps or measles, and rejoined their regiments to sicken and die of smallpox contracted in this "hospital," so called, and to infect and kill their comrades. It was through the persevering remonstrance and protest of the Commission that this murderous abuse was at last corrected.\*

The Commission has also circulated throughout the Army, and especially among the Medical Staff, many hundred thousand copies of its medical documents. This series now numbers

---

\* It is hardly necessary to say that all this occurred before the appointment of the present able and efficient Surgeon General, Dr. William A. Hammond.

eighteen publications, each devoted to some special point of prevention or cure. Some of them are addressed to the individual soldier, but the great majority are for the use of the Medical Staff, and relate to the prevention or treatment of the diseases to which camps are specially exposed, and to sundry operations of Military Surgery with which it cannot be expected that Surgeons recently appointed from civil life should be generally familiar. These monographs have been prepared at the request of the Commission, by some of the most eminent Physicians and Surgeons of the country. Embodying, in a condensed form, the latest results of science, they have been of great use to our Army Surgeons, who often encounter cases for which their previous practice has not specially prepared them, and who have neither medical libraries nor opportunities for consultation.

The Commission institutes special Inspections also from time to time, outside of its general Inspectorial system. It employs medical agents to look into the condition of such Camps or Hospitals as seem to require special attention, and to ascertain and report the wants of our armies during or immediately after a trying campaign. Within the past year it has made a thorough inspection of all General Military Hospitals, East and West, employing for this purpose Medical practitioners of the highest professional standing. Their recommendations of improvement in our Hospital system and its administration have been submitted to the proper authorities.

The Relief Agents of the Commission are not expressly charged with the office of Sanitary inspection, but their reports and journals, sent in at short intervals, help to keep the Commission informed of the condition of the Army, and of the measures required to maintain it in health, at every point from Annapolis to New Orleans.

As has been already stated, it is from the nature of the case impossible accurately to estimate how many men have been saved



from death or disease, and how much efficiency has been economized for the country by this preventive service, for though the results of the treatment of disease can be more or less accurately recorded, the result of measures for its prevention cannot be stated with any kind of certainty. The only attainable data are the percentage of disease among men to whom such preventive measures have been applied, and among those to whom they have not. Though inferences from a comparison of the two are not absolutely to be relied on, (because we can never be quite sure that the conditions of any two cases have been precisely the same), a comparison of the mortality rates of our Army with those of the British Armies in the Crimea and during the Peninsular War will nevertheless throw some light on the question.

The average annual loss of the whole British Army during the Peninsular War was one hundred and sixty-five men out of every thousand. Of these one hundred and thirteen died by disease or accident.

From 1803 to 1812 the average annual death-rate of the whole British Army "abroad" was 80 per 1,000—71 by disease and accident, and 9 by wounds in action.

In July, August and September, 1854, the British Army in the Crimea lost at the rate of two hundred and ninety-three men out of every thousand per annum. Ninety-six per cent. of this loss was from disease. During the next three months, October, November and December, 1854, their loss was at the annual rate of five hundred and eleven out of every thousand, seven-eighths of which loss was by disease. In January, 1855, it was *at the rate of 1174 per 1,000 per annum*, 97 per cent. of this loss being due to disease. During the first three months of that year it was at the annual rate of 912 per 1,000, and ninety-eight per cent. of the loss was due to disease.

Up to May 18, 1862, our armies had lost at the rate of fifty-

three per thousand per annum, and only forty-four per cent. of that loss was by disease and accident.\*

In estimating the value of these figures, it must be remembered that the conditions under which our soldiers serve have been generally unfavorable. Their field of operations includes large districts quite as insalubrious as any part of Spain, Portugal or the Crimea. There has at all times (and especially during the first year of the War) been among them a large proportion of half-disciplined recruits and of inexperienced officers, while the soldiers of Great Britain in the Peninsula and the Crimea were regulars under high discipline, and commanded by professional officers. The Commissariat and the Medical Department of the British Army were parts of a system long established and matured. In May, 1862, ours were newly organized (for the purposes of this War), and not yet in perfect working order. The Peninsular and Crimean Armies had therefore material advantages over our own. Yet we have lost far fewer men by disease. Even on Morris Island and in the pestilential swamps of the lower Mississippi our loss by disease has been smaller than that of any Army about which we have authentic information. For this great fact—equivalent to the addition of hundreds of millions to our National resources—the Nation can never be sufficiently thankful. No human agency could have ensured it. Though the average intelligence and culture of our common soldiers are beyond those of any army ever yet put into the field, and though the Medical Staff and the Sanitary Commission have worked diligently in their respective spheres, a blessing so great, exceptional and unlooked for can be attributed to none but the Highest cause.†

---

\* See Preliminary Report on the Mortality and Sickness of the Volunteer Forces, by E. B. Elliott, Actuary.

† The last report of the Secretary of War, as just published in the daily papers, states the number of patients in General Hospital, June 30, 1863, as 9.1 per cent., and in Field Hospital 4.4 per cent. of the whole national forces—and that of this

## DEPARTMENT OF ARMY RELIEF.

This work was not at first contemplated by the Commission. But the need of some central agency, to prevent the most distressing waste of supplies, and the most mischievous interference with Army discipline by irresponsible volunteer agents, was soon apparent. Boxes and bales of life-saving stores were rotting and perishing in railroad depots because wrongly directed, or because the Regiment for which they were intended had changed its position. Regiments were throwing away superfluous delicacies, while others were suffering for want of necessities. The bounty of the People was manifestly losing half its practical value because unsystematically distributed, and system could be secured only through some central and National organization.

The Commission therefore allied itself with Army Relief Associations and Societies already existing, promoted their formation where they did not exist, and undertook the great work of systematizing and economizing the public effort to aid the Army. This was then and still is a work of the first necessity. For, though no Government has ever provided for its Army so liberally as ours, and no People has ever given so liberally to supplement what Government does, both People and Government are still unable to do all that should be done, and men are still dying every day who could be saved from death at the cost of a few dollars. System and economy in the application of the public bounty, munificent as it is, are therefore indispensable. It must be applied so as not only to do good, but to do the greatest good to the greatest number, and the Commission endeavors so to apply it through its Army Relief Department.

The branches of the Commission daily receive supplies of

---

aggregate of 13.5 per cent., 11 were cases of sickness and 2.5 of wounds or other casualties. This is a most gratifying statement; especially when contrasted with the sickness-rates of foreign armies in the field and of our own during the Mexican war.



almost every kind from the sewing societies, Soldiers' Aid Societies, and other patriotic organizations that exist under various titles in almost every town and village of the North. The number of these organizations is exceedingly great. During August last more than one hundred and twenty contributed to the Chicago branch alone. More than twelve hundred have sent supplies to the New York branch. From the depots of these branches the Commission draws the supplies that are distributed through its relief agents.

The issues of these depots are not confined to goods received from auxiliary societies. The branches also purchase supplies on a large scale, especially in cases of emergency, as after a great battle. They have thus expended several hundred thousand dollars, the proceeds of which have gone directly to the relief of the army. The cargoes of ice, for example, sent to the hospitals of Morris Island and Hilton Head, by the Boston branch, at the expense of the Central Treasury, have been of inestimable value, not merely to the individual soldier, whose suffering they have alleviated, but to the country in expediting his convalescence and return to duty.

The general fund is used for like purposes. Up to December 1, 1863, the central Treasury at New York has expended more than a quarter of a million in the purchase of hospital clothing, chloroform, medicines, stimulants, beef stock, farinaceous food, and other material for army relief. This is over and above what it has spent in sending surgeons, medical dressers, and skilled nurses to the field.

The methods adopted for the systematic distribution of these stores have been carefully considered. They work well and economically, and are cordially approved by the military and medical authorities of the army.\* Losses by miscarriage and by

---

\* SURGEON-GENERAL'S OFFICE,

WASHINGTON CITY, D. C., February 13th, 1863.

Sir,—In reply to your communication of the 11th inst., I am directed to inform



the casualties of war (the capture of wagons by the enemy, for instance,) have been exceedingly small. Their estimated amount, all told, is less than ten thousand dollars.

For each great division of the army the Commission provides a chief sanitary inspector and a superintendent of field relief. If the force be stationary (as at Aquia Creek during the winter of 1862-3, at Vicksburg, and now on Morris Island,) a permanent lodge is established near its headquarters as a relief agency or semi-governmental hospital, and depot of supplies. If the force be in motion, supplies are issued from wagon trains or from steamboats, of which the commission has three, one in the Eastern Department and two in the Western. Transportation is sometimes paid for by the Commission, and sometimes put at its disposal by the Quartermaster's Department. There are now (November, 1863,) five relief agents attached to the Army of the Potomac, one for each army corps, each at the front in charge of a wagon train moving with its own corps, and kept constantly supplied from the Washington depot. Each is certainly saving one man's life every day, and probably more.

Lodges and depots are also established at every important hospital centre and convalescent camp to do such works of mercy as are not provided for by regulation, and cannot, therefore, be officially done at all. Each of these lodges and depots is, in fact, the office of a volunteer surgeon, quartermaster, and commissary,

---

you that the Sanitary Commission is believed to be the best repository, and distributor of the people's bounty; giving the greatest certainty of good to the soldier, with the least interference with the surgeons of the hospitals.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,  
By order of the Surgeon-General,

C. C. BYNNES,

Assistant-Surgeon,

U. S. Army.

Mr. W. H. HADLEY,  
Washington, D. C.

sent there by the people, to provide for accidental failures in the work of its government officials.

Pursuant to the settled policy of the Commission, its relief agents are instructed to dispense supplies to camps and hospitals through the regular military channels of supply whenever they can possibly do so. If they have shirts and blankets for a ragged regiment they distribute them, as a general rule, through its officers, and thus make the supplies effective, not only to relieve the soldier, but to maintain his confidence in his military superiors.

It has been said that surgeons and other officers misappropriate the stores thus put within their reach. Every great army must include a certain per centage, larger or smaller, of dishonesty and baseness, but such cases, if there have been any at all, are most exceptional in ours. The Commission has diligently followed up every rumor of the kind that has reached it, often employing special detective agents for the purpose, but in no one case has the report been confirmed. In most it has been conclusively disproved. Such stories originate in many ways. A soldier, for instance, sells or loses a blanket issued by the Commission, and marked with its stamp. The blanket finds its way to some second-hand shop in Washington or Cincinnati, and somebody who sees it there sets afloat an "authentic" report that goods sent the Commission for army relief are sold either by the Commission itself or by army officers. Or a surgeon uses the hospital stores of the Commission for his own relief when ill, thereby practically, though indirectly, applying them to the benefit of his patients, and thus creates a rumor that army surgeons generally live on beef tea and brandy meant for hospital use. There is no proof that a dollar's worth of the people's bounty has been thus perverted. If any portion has been, it is less than the hundredth part of one per cent. on the value of the supplies sent the army through the Commission. But if fifty dollars' worth out of every

hundred were proven to be intercepted by official corruption, it would not excuse our abandoning the work. It should rather inspire us to provide more actively for this additional source of deprivation and danger. What should we think of a farmer who declined to make provision for his stock because he suspected his servants of stealing part of their feed?

There are, undoubtedly, intelligent people who take a different view of the case, unconsciously influenced, perhaps, by that readiness to believe anything to the disadvantage of anybody holding public office which seems one of our national weaknesses. Some of them object on this ground to any organization that works in concert with surgeons or hospital stewards, and prefer the agency of volunteers who make unlawful inroads into camps and hospitals, and help the individual soldier at the expense of the system which must always be his main dependence. The inevitable mischief this practice must produce has been already pointed out. If one or two surgeons out of thousands have appropriated a few hundred dollars' worth of army stores out of millions, the loss is insignificant when compared with the slightest risk of impairing the *morale* and discipline of the army, on which, under God, we depend for our national existence.

The service directly rendered to the Army by the Supply Department, through the Commission and its branches, has been inestimable. A full statement of its results would require pages of detail, setting forth the operations of Relief Agents and their Assistants after every battle, in every general hospital, and in the camps and quarters of every Corps. Steamboats chartered by the Cincinnati Branch reached Fort Donelson laden with medicines and supplies of every kind in time to supplement the deficient stores of the Medical Staff, and save hundreds of men. At Antietam there were literally no Government Medical stores. The surgeons had used up their stock during General Pope's Campaign, in Virginia. Supplies sent them from Washington



had been captured at Manassas. The Quartermaster's Department, taxed to its utmost to forward ordinance and Commissary stores, ammunition and food, had been obliged to leave all medical supplies behind, miles away from the field. But the officers of the Commission, at Washington, advised by authority of this unfortunate deficiency, and of the impending battle, sent off by independent routes, and in good season, wagon trains laden with medical and surgical appliances, which reached the field before the battle was over, and for forty-eight hours after that hardly-won victory thousands of wounded men got all their opiates, stimulants, chloroform, medicines, appropriate diet, and hospital clothing and bedding, mainly from Agents of the Sanitary Commission. So at Gettysburgh, the headquarters and supply depots of the Commission were established and at work while the battle was hottest. At Vicksburgh, Murfreesboro, Chancellorsville, Chattanooga, Chicamauga, Fredericksburg, its relief agents dispensed many thousand dollars' worth of life-saving supplies. During our Peninsular Campaign, it did the Army most signal service. The history of its work on the Peninsula—at White House, Savage's Station, and Harrison's Landing—is yet to be written. Its Relief Depots and Hospital Transport Service did more to relieve misery and save life than any other voluntary organization has ever done within the same period.

After the second battle of Bull's Run the wagon trains of the Commission moving from Washington, met our retreating forces at Centreville, exhausted by hard fighting, and wholly without restoratives or medicines. Their medical supplies had fallen into Rebel hands. At this point, as at many others, the Commission's proper work of supplementing accidental deficiencies in the Army system saved hundreds from perishing by prostration and enabled them to return to their ranks and their duty.\*

---

\* Within ten days after CHATTANOOGA, four thousand packages of Sanitary stores had gone to the field from Nashville, and two thousand more were on the way

This Department of the Commission's work has cost, not money alone, but health and life. Many of its Agents have already died in the service, or have been obliged to leave it broken down by overwork and exposure or poisoned by malaria. Another name has just been added to its roll of martyrs to our national cause—that of Rev. James Richardson, a gentleman of education and high social position, who died at his post November 10th, 1863, of disease contracted in the service of the Commission. Two of its Agents were captured near Gettysburgh, while carrying supplies to the front. They have undergone months of starvation and ill-treatment at Richmond, from the effects of which it is probable they will never fully recover.

In our General Hospitals the Relief Department of the Commission is now a recognized institution, on which surgeons rely for certain extra-governmental supplies, as fully as they depend on Government for ordinary rations. Accidental failure of Government supplies sometimes obliges them to rely on it for everything. This work of the Commission is not confined to Hospitals at or near the front. During the summer of 1862, for example, a medical officer of the Commission learning that a transport from the Peninsula had just landed several hundred invalids on one of the Islands of an Atlantic harbor, thought proper to make a personal inspection of their condition. He found them mostly bad cases of malarious typhoid fever, requiring vigilant nursing and stimulation from hour to hour, but without proper food or stimulants, or any attendance, save that of one or two enlisted men detailed as nurses. The Post Surgeon had gone to bed in a condition that forbade his doing more for

---

down the Mississippi. Up to 17th November last, 5,000 packages and boxes had been forwarded for the relief of the wounded men at CHICKAMAUGA. The means of classifying these supplies are not yet at hand. But a detailed statement is appended of the supplies issued to the army of the Potomac after GETTYSBURGH. (See Appendix A.)

his patients than to utter a cordial but semi-articulate consent that the Sanitary Commission should take care of them. The representative of the Commission forthwith sent a boat to the city, which returned laden with beef, milk, and brandy bought at the Hotels,\* for it was late and all the shops were closed. He extemporized a kitchen, and spent the whole night administering beef tea and milk punch to these neglected men, most of whom would have been dead or past recovery before morning but for his intervention. Many of them were saved, and an unworthy employé of the Medical Department was summarily dismissed within forty-eight hours, upon report of the facts.

This is an extreme case. Instances of such misconduct are most rare, for since the re-organization of the Medical Bureau, our army surgeons have almost universally labored with a degree of fidelity, energy, and self-devotion beyond all praise. But the Commission has relieved many Hospitals suffering like destitution, for which their officers were not to blame. As already stated, the Medical Bureau has no independent transportation. Military necessity sometimes requires that guns, ammunition and provisions be forwarded with all possible despatch to the entire exclusion of everything else. Supplies actually issued and consigned to surgeons and urgently needed by them may thus often be unavoidably detained on the road for days or weeks.

The machinery of the War Department is necessarily rigid and wooden. A flexible organization like the Sanitary Commission, governed by principle rather than by rule, and, above all, able to exercise *discretionary powers* necessarily forbidden to the officials of Government, can obviously render great service in filling the gaps that must occur in its working, especially on a field so vast as that of the present War.

---

\* (And paid for at Hotel prices—an exceptional incident in the experience of the Commission.)



The value of this Relief system is well understood by the whole Army.\* A circular letter was lately addressed to a large number of medical officers in charge of general hospitals inquiring through what Agency, National, local or individual, supplies sent their patients did most good. The answer was almost unanimous,—“Through the Sanitary Commission, because it ministers impartially to all National soldiers, East and West, and because it understands the paramount importance of subordination to Military system in all efforts for Army relief.”†

\* HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF TENNESSEE.

*Special Order, No. 86.*

1. The Quartermaster's Department will provide and furnish a suitable steamboat, to be called the “United States Sanitary Store Boat,” and put the same in charge of the U. S. Sanitary Commission, to be used by it exclusively for the conveyance of goods calculated to prevent disease, and supplemental to the Government supply of stores for the relief of the sick and wounded.

2. No person will be allowed to travel on said boat except sick officers of the army and navy, (and they only on permits from their proper commanding officers,) discharged soldiers and employes of said Sanitary Commission, *and no goods whatever for trading or commercial purposes* will be carried on said boat,) and no goods will be taken for individuals or with any conditions which will prevent them being delivered to those most needing them in the army or navy.

3. The accounts of all packages to be shipped on said U. S. Sanitary Store Boat will be inspected before shipment, unless an invoice of their contents has been received, the correctness of which is assured by the signature of some person of known loyalty and integrity. A statement, showing what goods have been placed on board at each trip will be sent to the Medical Director of the Department at these Headquarters.

4. A weekly statement will be made by the Sanitary Commission to the Department of the Medical Director, showing what Sanitary supplies have been issued by said Commission, and to whom issued.

5. All orders authorizing the free transportation of Sanitary Stores from Cairo south on boats other than the one herein provided for are hereby rescinded.

By order Major General U. S. GRANT.

JOHN A. RAWLINGS, Asst. Adt. General.

† This circular and all the letters in reply to it were published by the Women's Central Association of New York in a pamphlet entitled “How can we best help our Camps and Hospitals?” New York: 1863.



## DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL RELIEF.

The necessity of this work became apparent as soon as our volunteer forces began to assemble. It was first undertaken at Washington, in August, 1861, and its results there soon led to the establishment of agencies for the same purpose at other points. It is now in operation throughout the country.

The General Relief System, of which some account has just been given, assists the soldier when in camp or in hospital, by strengthening and supplementing the military system with which he is then in close connexion, and on which it is his right and his duty mainly to depend. The Department of Special Relief deals mainly with the waifs and estrays of the Army, and relieves the individual soldier when temporarily out of connexion with the Military system. It gives him shelter, food, medical treatment and transportation when it is impossible for him to obtain them from Government. At points like Washington or Nashville, for example, there may be daily found scores or hundreds of men separated from their regiments and anxious to rejoin them, but unable to obtain transportation, and without legal title meanwhile to quarters or rations, or any kind of recognition or aid from any Government officer within reach. Some are returning after a furlough, but find that their regiment has moved. Their little stock of money has given out, and they must beg through the streets for aught that any official has the power to do for them. Others are sick, but no Hospital can admit them without a breach of regulations. Others are waiting to get their back pay, but there is some technical defect in their papers for which they are not responsible, and they must wait a week for a letter to reach their regiment and be answered, before they can draw a dollar from the Paymaster, and subsist as they can meanwhile.

These seem at first to be serious abuses, but they are, in fact, merely inevitable incidents of the rigorous system of detail

that is essential to every army, and especially to armies so large as ours. It is only through technical regulations, unsparingly enforced, that the most mischievous irregularities can be prevented, and the army as a whole kept in working condition.

But any such system, however necessary on the whole, must produce cases of hardship, and in great armies such cases must be numerous. When the subject matter of these regulations is the provision of food, shelter, clothing and hospital treatment, whatever hardship their inflexibility produces, must cost health, efficiency and life. The Army has thus but the choice of two evils. It must suffer as a whole, because regulations are not rigidly enforced, or individuals must suffer because they are. There can of course be no question which of these two evils is the greater. However great may be the amount of suffering thus caused, only a blind and reckless philanthropy would seek to remedy it at the expense of discipline. A large portion of the suffering in question arises, in fact, not so much from the rigor of the system as from the want of accuracy on the part of those who administer it, and seems due to a deficiency rather than an excess of "red tape."

For this inevitable evil, the Commission seeks to provide through its Special Relief Department. To the extent of its means it keeps everywhere within the soldier's reach establishments to supply him with food, shelter and medical care, when he can get them nowhere else, and to supplement the inflexible machinery of the Commissary Department, the Quartermaster's Department, the Paymaster's Office, and the Medical Bureau.

This Department does much work also that can hardly be distinguished from that of General Relief, except in this, that while the latter provides for men in camp, in hospital, or on the march, the former gives them especial attention and care while passing from the condition of recruits to that of National soldiers, and while still unfamiliar with the system through which they must obtain subsistence, quarters and medical treatment.

For example, a newly-raised regiment reaches Louisville or Washington late at night, after a weary, depressing day, spent without food in cattle cars without seats. The men are exhausted, and a dozen or twenty of them are ill. Sick and well, they are deposited at the railroad terminus. The Regimental Surgeon's medical stores are buried in the baggage cars, and cannot be got out till morning. He is in a strange place, and does not know where to go to get his patients into hospital. The Company officers are equally inexperienced. It may take them half the next day to ascertain how to get rations and quarters for their men. Meanwhile, the men must stand in the street and get on as best they may, without food, shelter, or medical attendance, the healthy sickening and the sick growing worse from hour to hour.

This is a very moderate statement of what has occurred over and over again. Many have died of fatigue and exposure under these circumstances in the street or on the floor of a depot, before their connection with the Government machinery could be so established as to become available for their relief. A little suitable food or stimulus, and a few hours rest, would probably have saved most of them. But their officers cannot, under the circumstances, be severely censured for the loss.

The Commission provides for cases of this class. Its agents are kept informed by telegraph of the movements of newly-raised regiments, and are prepared to receive them, with coffee and soup for the well men, and with ambulances for the sick, who are at once conveyed to a "Home" of the Commission, where they receive food, shelter, nursing, and medical care, till they are able to join their regiment, or are duly transferred to General Hospital. Many thousand men "slightly ailing" have been saved from illness that would have made them unserviceable for weeks or months, and perhaps forever, by the few days or hours of repose, comfort and medical care thus afforded them.



The Homes of the Commission provide in like manner for the large class already mentioned of men separated from their regiments, unable to get transportation, and without money or friends, and to whom no officer within their reach can supply quarters or rations without personal liability and violation of Army rules. Every such case is carefully scrutinized. If it be genuine, the man receives subsistence and quarters at the "Home" until the position of his regiment is ascertained, and he is furnished transportation to rejoin it.

A regiment carrying its sick with it in ambulances is often detained in passing through a city. As the length of this detention is uncertain, and the regiment may have to move at a moment's notice, these sick men cannot well be transferred to a General Hospital. Their admission and their discharge would each require too much time. But if a "Home" of the Commission be within reach it provides for them during their detention.

The work of the Special Relief Department is too various for complete classification. Every day brings out some new case for its intervention, differing from all that have preceded it. But its chief objects are as follows:\*

*First.*—To supply the sick of newly arrived regiments such medicines, food, and care as their officers are, under the circumstances, unable to give them. The men thus aided are chiefly those not sick enough to have a claim on a general hospital, but who nevertheless need immediate care to prevent serious illness.

*Second.*—To furnish suitable food, lodging, care, and assistance to men who are honorably discharged as unfit for further service, but who are often obliged to wait for several days be-

---

\* See printed reports of Mr. F. N. Knapp, Superintendent of Special Relief.



fore they obtain their papers and pay, or to sell their claims to speculators at a sacrifice.

*Third.*—To communicate with distant regiments in behalf of men whose certificates of disability or descriptive lists on which to draw their pay prove to be defective—the invalid soldiers meantime being cared for, and not exposed to the fatigue and risk of going in person to their regiments to have their papers corrected.

*Fourth.*—To act as the unpaid agent or attorney of soldiers who are too feeble or too utterly disabled to present their own claim at the Paymaster's office.

*Fifth.*—To look into the condition of discharged and furloughed men who seem without means to pay the expense of going to their homes, and to furnish the necessary means where the man is found to be true and the need real.

*Sixth.*—To secure to soldiers going home on sick leave railroad tickets at reduced rates, and through an agent at the railroad station to see that they are not robbed or imposed upon.

*Seventh.*—To see that all men who are discharged and paid off do at once leave the city at which they receive their discharge, for their homes, or in cases where they have been induced by evil companions to remain behind, to endeavor to rescue them, and see them started homeward with through tickets.

*Eighth.*—To make men going home discharged, or on sick leave, reasonably clean and comfortable before their departure.

*Ninth.*—To be prepared to meet, at once, with food or other aid, such immediate necessities as arise when sick men arrive in large numbers from battle fields or distant hospitals.

*Tenth.*—To keep a watchful eye upon all soldiers who are out of hospitals, yet not in service; and give information to the proper authorities of such soldiers as seem endeavoring to avoid duty or to desert from the ranks.

In all these arrangements the Commission and its branches receive practical support and aid from the Quartermaster's Department, which makes its beneficial work tenfold more effective.

It must be understood, that the "Homes" are administered in no spirit of indiscriminate philanthropy. Malingerers and deserters who have found refuge within them under false pretences, are promptly turned over to military authority, and no soldier is permitted to enjoy their privileges for a single day after he is pronounced fit for duty.

These Relief Stations are established at most of our Military Centres. The "Home" at Washington is a large three-story brick building on North Capitol street, with temporary wooden buildings around it, and with auxiliary "lodges" established near the Paymaster's office, and other centres around which soldiers are obliged to congregate. Each has its provision of beds, and of food, its housekeeper, nurses, and attending Physician, and its staff of experts in Army relief. Before they were established men actually died of weariness and exhaustion while waiting their turn in the dense crowd and blazing sunshine around the Paymaster's Office. Soldiers physically unequal to this ordeal are now provided with shelter and rations till they have secured their pay.

The following extract from Mr. Knapp's last report on the "Home" at Washington indicates the nature and value of the Commission's Special Relief work at that point:

" 'The Home,' 374 North Capitol street.—Increased accommodations for securing room and comfort have been obtained; and

“ now, instead of 140 beds, we have at the Home 320, besides a  
 “ large baggage-room, a convenient wash-room, a bath-house, &c.  
 “ Two of the additional buildings, one 16 feet by 60, the other 28  
 “ feet by 90, were put up by the Quartermaster’s Department.  
 “ The third building 30 feet by 50 (with an L 20 by 35) for a  
 “ ‘Hospital,’ (this was at the expense of the Commission,) at a cost  
 “ of about \$800. The necessity for this building, devoted exclu-  
 “ sively to Hospital purposes, is found in the fact, that although  
 “ the men who came under the care of the Commission are  
 “ mostly on their way to their homes, and might therefore be  
 “ supposed to be not so very feeble as to need specially “ Hos-  
 “ pital ” treatment, yet, as a matter of fact many of them are  
 “ weakened to such a degree by disease, that by the time they  
 “ reach Washington, or the railway station from the front, or  
 “ from the various hospitals, their strength is nearly exhausted,  
 “ and they are only restored, if at all, by such care as hospital  
 “ treatment affords; and frequently they are too far gone to  
 “ make that available, as is indicated by the record which shows  
 “ that from February 23d to October 1st, there were received at  
 “ the Home 665 men, very sick, who were placed in the new  
 “ Hospital, of which number thirty-eight died there. This was  
 “ from February 23d, when this new building was opened, but  
 “ dating back to December 15th, there has been under the  
 “ charge of the Commission, including those just named, some  
 “ 900 men who were very sick and feeble, of which number a  
 “ total of sixty-one (61) have died at the Home. These were  
 “ nearly all men having their discharge papers with them, and  
 “ they had consequently given up their claim upon the General  
 “ or Regimental Hospitals, and had taken the first stage of their  
 “ journey towards their homes. If they had not found the care  
 “ which the Commission thus offered to them, these same men  
 “ must have died in the cars along the way, or at some stopping  
 “ point on their journey. Of the remaining 840 of these very



“ feeble men we have reason to believe that many, except for the  
 “ care and rest secured to them by the provision of the Commis-  
 “ sion, could not have lived through their journeys.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

“ At this office and lodge No. 4, from January 1st to October  
 “ 1st, 1863, the number of discharged soldiers whose accounts  
 “ against the Government have been settled through our assist-  
 “ ance, men who were too feeble to attend to settling their own  
 “ accounts, or who were unable to obtain their pay because of  
 “ some charge against them on the pay-rolls, or some errors in  
 “ their papers, amount to 2,130.”

“ Information and directions have been given relative to set-  
 “ tling pay accounts, collecting arrears of pay, extra duty pay,  
 “ and commutation money to about 9,000 men.

“ The aggregate value of the 2130 cases amounted to  
 “ \$130,159 01. This amount was collected and paid to the  
 “ soldiers through this office.

“ But for the gratuitous aid thus afforded, these soldiers dis-  
 “ charged from the service, disabled by wounds, or worn down  
 “ by long marches and exposure in the field, or enfeebled by  
 “ disease, anxious to get home, would have applied to ‘ Claim  
 “ Agents’ for aid in obtaining speedily their dues from Gov-  
 “ ernment, submitting willingly to pay a commission ranging  
 “ from 10 to 40 per cent. These Agents, with some rare and  
 “ admirable exceptions, in four cases out of every five, impede  
 “ the settlement of accounts instead of facilitating them.

“ Taking 10 per cent. as an average, which is the lowest com-  
 “ mission usually charged by Claim Agents, the amount saved  
 “ to the soldiers in adjusting the 2130 cases of which a record  
 “ has been kept, is shewn to be \$13,015 90. Add to this 10 per  
 “ cent. of the probable aggregate value of the 9000 cases in  
 “ which information and directions have been given, (for in most  
 “ of these cases the soldiers would otherwise have gone to Claim



“ Agents) and the amount saved to the soldiers through the  
 “ Commission by this office, is shown to be at least \$70,000  
 “ during nine months ending September 30th.”

“ The number of letters written in adjusting the above cases  
 “ of sufficient importance to make a copy necessary, 2,224.

“ Many of the cases have been very difficult to adjust, requir-  
 “ ing several weeks to complete them.

“ The ‘ Home ’ or ‘ Lodge for Special Relief ’ at Alexandria  
 “ is almost equally important with those at Washington. Alexan-  
 “ dria is the gateway toward home for the sick and wounded of  
 “ the Potomac Army. During the first week after this Agency  
 “ was established, it provided meals for 1761 sick or wounded  
 “ men who could have got them nowhere else.

“ In January, 1863, a ‘ Nurse’s Home ’ was opened at Washing-  
 “ ton. It has proved a source of immense relief to nurses arriving  
 “ in the city, and to those worn down by service at the hospitals,  
 “ and needing a few days of quiet and rest, and also to the wives,  
 “ mothers and daughters of soldiers who have come on seeking  
 “ their husbands, sons or fathers in hospital. During the past two  
 “ months many of this latter class have been cared for who, utterly  
 “ ignorant of the cost of their journey, and of obtaining board  
 “ and lodging, even for a day or two, in the city, were utterly  
 “ destitute and helpless. Hundreds of weary and almost broken  
 “ hearted women have been received as at a home. Many re-  
 “ fugees also—mothers and little children—have been received  
 “ here and warmed and clothed. This has proved in its working  
 “ one of the *kindest* charities of the Commission.”

Since the “ Nurses’ Home ” was opened in January, the total  
 number of nights’ lodging given has been..... 1583  
 Meals furnished..... 3040  
 Number of women sheltered and admitted..... 1190  
 Total cost to Commission, about.....\$2,300

The Homes of the Special Relief Department at Washington, Louisville, Alexandria, Annapolis, and New Orleans, are supported by the Central Treasury of the Commission; at other points mainly by its Branches.

Their work up to October 1st, 1863, has been as follows:—

“THE HOME,” WASHINGTON, D. C.

Number of individuals received.....	7,287
“ “ nights lodging furnished.....	26,533
“ “ meals given.....	65,621

LODGES NOS. 2, 3, 4 AND 5, WASHINGTON, D. C.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	23,590
“ “ meals given.....	184,995

“HOME” IN CLEVELAND, OHIO.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	2,569
“ “ meals given.....	12,227

LODGE AT MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	2,850
“ “ meals given.....	14,780

LODGE AT NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	4,821
“ “ meals given.....	11,909

“HOME” AT LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	17,785
“ “ meals given at the Home.....	52,080
“ “ “ “ at Station House.....	49,933

“HOME” AT CAIRO, ILLINOIS.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	79,550
“ “ meals given.....	170,150

“HOME” AT CINCINNATI, OHIO.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	40,017
“ “ meals given (about).....	10,000

LODGE AT ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	604
“ “ meals given.....	5,980

“HOME” AT BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	1,407
“ “ meals given.....	4,129

“HOME” FOR NURSES AND FOR SOLDIERS WIVES AND MOTHERS AT  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	1,583
“ “ meals given.....	3,640

“HOME” FOR NURSES AT ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	569
“ “ meals given.....	2,847

“HOME” AT CHICAGO.

Number of nights lodgings furnished.....	3,109
“ “ meals given.....	11,325
The aggregate of nights' lodgings furnished by the Special Relief Department up to the 1st October last, is therefore.....	206,570
And of meals provided.....	602,656

The total cost of the Special Relief Department at Washington, Annapolis and Alexandria, from August, 1861, to 1st October, 1863, has been \$24,582 00.\*

Among the modes in which this Department does its work of relief are several that have not been mentioned.

For example, it corresponds on behalf of soldiers with their friends. In special cases it sends Agents with officers and soldiers suffering under severe disease to take care of them on their journey home.† It attends to the claims of soldiers whose pay is unjustly withheld through mistake or otherwise. It looks into cases of punishment or disgrace alleged to be unjust, and if they be found so on investigation, lays the evidence before the proper military authorities.‡ Such errors must occur in the working of a military system so extensive as ours, and the Commission has thus saved many good and faithful soldiers from undeserved punishment and disgrace. It employs detectives to ferret out and bring to justice sharpers and gamblers who live by preying on the soldiers. It looks out for men who set off for hospital on foot, but break down by the way, and supplies them with conveyances.

\* The "Home" recently established at New Orleans has lodged and fed 2,162 men from October 16th to 22d November, 1863. From November 22d to 27th, its daily average of cases relieved was more than 250.

† The expense of this service has been defrayed from a special fund raised for the purpose. Though a most humane and life saving office, it seems to involve too large an outlay on individual cases, to be paid for out of the general Treasury of the Commission.

‡ Between Oct. 1 and Dec. 1, 1863, thirty-four applications were made to the Special Relief Agency at Washington alone, by men claiming to have been unjustly disgraced and deprived of their arrears of pay as "deserters" or "absent without leave." The investigation of some of these claims required twenty letters to Hospital Directors and Regimental officers, for it was necessary to ascertain and to prove where the applicant had been during every day of the period of his alleged absence from duty. Twenty-eight of these thirty-four claims were proved to be valid, and were recognized as valid by the military authorities. The men had not known how to state them, or how to obtain the necessary evidence.



In short, there is hardly a service within the whole range of charity that has not been rendered our soldiers by this agency.

And they must surely endure longer and fight better for knowing that they are thus watched over and aided by the People whose cause they maintain.

#### HOSPITAL DIRECTORY.

This branch of the Special Relief Department is of comparatively recent date. Its offices are at Washington, Philadelphia, Louisville and New York. Its necessity arises from the practical difficulty of obtaining information about men in hospital from official sources. It keeps a record of the name, regiment and company of every man admitted into General Hospital, and of the nature of his disease or injury, and also of every man dying or discharged, and if discharged, whether it was to rejoin his regiment, or as permanently disabled. These records are corrected daily. Friends and relatives can thus readily ascertain by letter whether any given man is in general hospital, and if so, all particulars about him.

The names entered on the Hospital Directory books from June 9th to Oct. 1st, 1863, were—

At the Washington office.....	64,635
“ “ New York “ .....	18,771
“ “ Philadelphia “ .....	12,213
“ “ Louisville “ from May 9th.....	96,433
Total .....	192,052
Add number of names on record June 9th.....	215,221
Total.....	407,273

Recorded as follows :

Washington office to Oct. 1st, 1863.....	169,007
New York “ “ “ “ “ .....	27,320
Philadelphia “ “ “ “ “ .....	24,513
Louisville “ “ “ “ “ .....	186,433
Total.....	407,273

The number of inquiries and of answers, from the organization of the Directory to Oct. 1, 1863, have been as follows. The surplus of inquiries over answers is the number of cases in which the subject of inquiry had not been in General Hospital since the Directory System went into operation.

Washington office, inquiries....	6,712	Answers.....	4,524
New York     “     “     “     .....	656	“     “     .....	474
Philadelphia     “     “     “     .....	547	“     “     .....	348
Louisville     “     “     “     .....	5,852	“     “     .....	4,016
Inquiries.... ..	13,767	Answers.....	9,362

It may at first seem that this undertaking, however humane, has no connection with the Sanitary interests of the Army, and is therefore no legitimate work for the Sanitary Commission. But it practically multiplies to a great extent the facilities for correspondence and communication between men in hospital and their friends at home, and such communications are often worth more than any medicine to the sick and convalescent. They promote health, bodily and mental, keep up the sick man's morale, and expedite his recovery and his return to duty.

#### OTHER WORK OF THE COMMISSION.

The Commission does much work beside that comes strictly under none of the preceding heads. During and after a battle, its medical officers act as volunteer aids to those of the Army, while its Relief Agents add to their proper office of dispensing medicines and supplies the functions of nurses, hospital stewards, and ambulance drivers. Honorable instances are recorded of the courage and devotion with which they have brought off wounded men under fire.\* The Commission retains

---

\* We find the following in the *Port Royal Free South* of the 25th instant:

“The officers of the United States Sanitary Commission have won for themselves a splendid reputation in this department. They have by their discretion and

no one in its service who shrinks from any work, hazardous, menial, or mechanical, that comes in the course of his duty.

It has organized a system by which extra supplies are furnished our general hospitals at prime cost, thus effecting a very large daily saving to their "hospital funds." Up to 1st November last it had thus expended more than \$70,000 on hospitals around Washington, and in South Carolina.

It endeavors to keep the people, and especially the loyal women of the North, informed of the wants of the Army, and stimulates the production and forwarding of Army supplies.

It calls the attention of Government to the defects and abuses that appear from time to time in the various branches of the service and directly or indirectly affect the health of the Army, and recommends to Government such improvements in the Medical and Sanitary administration of the Army as seem entitled to its attention.

It relieves our men in rebel prisons wherever it is permitted to do so, and is now sending to Richmond (at a cost of nearly a thousand dollars a day) large consignments of food and other supplies, appropriate for men broken down by confinement and starvation.\*

---

zeal saved many valuable lives. Under the guns of Wagner, in the hottest of the fire, their trained corps picked up and carried off the wounded almost as they fell. As many of our men were struck while ascending the parapet and then rolled into the moat, which at high tide contains six feet of water, they must inevitably have perished had they been suffered to remain. But the men who were detailed for the service with Dr. Marsh went about the work with intrepidity and coolness worthy of all praise. The skill and experience of the members of the Commission has, since the battle, been unremittingly employed to render comfortable the sick and wounded.—*N. Y. Evening Post*, July 30, 1863.

\* It has established on every flag-of-truce boat from Fortress Monroe for the reception of exchanged prisoners a depot of such medicines and restoratives as are most suitable for men in the distressing condition in which they are generally found when discharged from confinement at Richmond. From Nov. 17 to Dec. 3 it has sent \$28,000 worth of supplies beside to Richmond. There is every reason to believe that these supplies are not intercepted or misappropriated, and that the Rebel authorities do in good faith protect them from attack, and convey them to their destination. [Dec. 10, 1863.]



Above all, it loses no opportunity of advocating every measure calculated to increase the efficiency of the Military system itself in all its relations with the sanitary interests of the Army; and it has in this way probably done the Army as much substantial service as by all its other agencies together. More than two years of experience and observation have shown it that the main dependence of the soldier, sick or well, must be on the Military system, and not on outside help. The reformation of the Medical Bureau, and the appointment of an honest, energetic, accomplished and fearless officer as Surgeon-General,\* is mainly due to the influence the Commission brought to bear on Government. It has thus done more for the health of the Army than could have been done for it in any other way whatever.

The Commission hopes to effect further reforms, still sorely needed, and thus by still farther increasing the efficiency of the Medical Bureau, to make its own existence less and less a necessity to the Army.

#### OBJECTIONS TO THE COMMISSION.

The Commission has from the first enjoyed a degree of public favor and confidence greater than it had any right to expect. Certain objections, however, are made to its system and methods which require a brief notice, though they have for the most part been already anticipated.

One is that the Commission employs paid agents, and that its organization is expensive. It has already been shown that paid and permanent Agents are in the long run cheaper than unpaid volunteers, because the superiority of skilled labor over unskilled, is much more than equivalent to the amount thus paid to secure it.

The more general charge that the Commission's system is a

---

\* Dr. Wm. A. Hammond.



costly one, is believed to be wholly unfounded. Its salaries are on a most moderate scale.\* Thanks to the co-operation of Government and the liberality of Railroad, Telegraph and Express Companies, and other private agencies, its expenses for transportation and telegraphing are not one-tenth of what they would otherwise be. A reference to the statistics given above of the cost of its special relief system at Washington, Alexandria and Annapolis, show how much work it has done at comparatively trifling expense. The value of the supplies it has actually issued to the Army from its numerous depots, East and West, can only be estimated, and these estimates vary largely, the lowest estimate being about four millions of dollars, and the highest exceeding seven.

These supplies have been carried all over the country, from Maine to Texas, and from Washington to Vicksburg, in charge of special agents, and deposited in Relief Stations where storekeepers are necessarily engaged to protect them, and Relief Agents to distribute them; yet this great mass of bulky stores has been moved, stored at the depots, moved to the front, stored again in temporary depots, and then distributed, at a total expense to the Central Treasury of less than one and seven-eighths per cent. on their lowest valuation.

Another objection to the Commission is generally expressed somewhat as follows:—

“It is a very benevolent organization, no doubt, and relieves

---

\* It may be proper here distinctly to state, that no member of the Commission receives, or ever has received a dollar from its treasury, or from any other quarter, in the shape of salary, or compensation for his services as Commissioner. Four of its members hold office, viz. : its President, Vice-President, and Treasurer, and its Associate Secretary at Louisville. Of these, the first three have been able to do their official work without absolutely sacrificing all their other duties, and they have done it without dreaming of “pay” from any quarter. The Associate Secretary, who has removed his home from Cleveland to Louisville, abandoned his profession, and devoted his whole time and energies to his official work, receives a moderate salary.

“ a great deal of suffering. But it does harm in the long run,  
 “ because officers are tempted to lean upon it and neglect their  
 “ official duty of providing for their men. Without the Com-  
 “ mission there might have been more suffering at first; but  
 “ this evil would have cured itself by this time. Officers would  
 “ have been obliged to become more active and vigilant, and  
 “ the Army would now be in perfect condition and need no help  
 “ from without.”

The principle on which this criticism rests underlies all the policy of the Commission. It has already been shown that its system is so framed and guarded, that no Army officer can take advantage of it to escape duty or to cover up inefficiency. But in the application of this principle by those who use it as an objection to the Commission, there is a peculiar fallacy which it is worth while to point out.

So far from endangering the military system by relief from without, the Commission has from the first been the chief protection of the Army against this very danger, and the only organization, official or private, that has openly aided and encouraged our Military authorities in their endeavor to avert it. Though wholly dependent on popular sympathy for support, it has uniformly maintained this position, though well aware that it is peculiarly distasteful to many whose patriotism and humanity are stronger than their judgment.

The Commission did not create the unprecedented popular effort to furnish supplies for the sick and wounded, which will distinguish the history of this War from that of all others. That movement began before the Commission was in existence, when the first Regiment of National Volunteers was mustered into the National service. It was equally spontaneous and irresistible. Neither the Commission nor Government could have checked it had they felt disposed to try. It still continues, and it will continue so long as a single regiment remains in the field.

The Commission when first appointed found the stream in full flow, but guided by zeal rather than discretion. One regiment out of every two, East and West, was waited on and followed up by Agents and Relief Committees from its own town or county, begging surgeons and quartermasters to take a few packages of hospital stores off their hands, and surreptitiously administering delicacies and medicaments wherever they could secure a recipient. Other regiments were suffering for want of necessary subsistence, because recruited in some neighborhood less wealthy or less liberal. Officers seemed as much disturbed by the demoralizing interference of friends in the rear as by the demonstrations of the enemy in their front.

The Commission recognized the depth of the National impulses that were at work, the immense mischief they might do if allowed to run wild, and the good they might do if organized and regulated, and it undertook the work of so guiding these efforts as to make them more effective and less dangerous to discipline. It found the Army inundated by a flood of public bounty, wasting itself where it was not wanted, and threatening to undermine the foundations of official responsibility. Its endeavor has been and is to direct this stream into measured channels, carrying it to the points at which it will do most good, and applying its power to strengthen the working of the military system.

It has thus to a great extent saved the Army from the mischief this torrent of outside relief might have done it. If it has not fully done so, it is because so many agencies and societies for Army relief continue to work independently of the Commission and by methods which it does not approve and cannot control.

The objection that "Government ought to do the work the Commission is doing" has no longer the foundation it had before the Reform of the Medical Bureau. Government might undoubtedly still farther invigorate that Bureau and thus still



farther diminish the necessity for the Commission. Let us hope that it soon will. But to refuse aid to the Army on this ground would be mere inhumanity. No Government, moreover, has yet been able through its own proper machinery to do for its soldiers what the Government and the Commission together do for ours, and the objection above quoted, though undeniable as an abstract proposition concerning the functions of an ideal Government, is not applicable to our Government, or to any other that exists, or has ever existed. The provision Government makes for the physical wants of the soldier in sickness and in health is profuse when compared with that made by France or England, or by any other power. But it cannot permanently maintain a medical and surgical staff large enough to provide with promptness (or rather without such delay as would seem shocking and criminal if it occurred in connection with some casualty of civil life) for the casualties of battle even on the smallest scale.

A regiment, for instance, of a thousand strong, after a day's fighting, leaves, say one hundred men wounded on the field, and scattered over an area of one or two square miles. To hunt them up and provide for them there are one surgeon and one assistant, with a small detail of enlisted men. The next day the regiment moves twenty miles farther, fights again, and leaves as many more wounded men on this second battle ground. The surgeon and his assistant cannot possibly give thorough attention to every case in these two widely separated field hospitals. Twenty surgeons would be hardly enough to care for both during the first few days, as patients are cared for in private practice. Public sympathy with our wounded men demands that each receive the full benefit of all that vigilance and science can do for each of them. But government cannot provide this measure of relief. There are not in the country thoroughly educated surgeons enough to permanently supply every regiment with



even five competent medical officers instead of two. But twenty to each would be too few to give full attention and care to all the sufferers after a great battle.

Government may be theoretically bound to supply this deficiency, but it is practically beyond the resources of government. The gap has been filled up during the last two years, in some degree at least, by the creative energies of the people exerted through the Sanitary Commission. The people thus maintains a supplementary Medical Bureau of its own for the purpose, among others, of sending forward civil surgeons of the first professional rank to reinforce the army medical staff in emergency. When a battle is in progress, or at hand, the relief agents of the Commission on the spot telegraph to Louisville, Cincinnati, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, or some other point, and its agency there engages the best medical talent within reach for temporary service during the next week or fortnight.

It has already been shown that our military system is, and must be, founded on a rigorous system of regulations and official responsibility, and that any such system must sometimes break down by unavoidable accident or otherwise. Public opinion makes too little allowance for this. It condemns the Medical Bureau because its stores arrive too late at one point, and gives it no credit for the energy and prevision that carried them in good season to ninety-nine others.

Government must depend for its transportation on railroads and steamboats. Its trains and transports are just as liable as any others to accident and detention, and often much more so. Such accidents and detentions often cause suffering and death, for which neither the Medical Bureau nor any official is justly accountable. In every such case our camps and hospitals have the relief agencies of the Commission to fall back upon, and though in supplying their wants the Commission is literally "doing what Government ought to do," it nevertheless does

what Government cannot do at that particular time and place, and what the people would not willingly see left undone.

The Commission was at one time accused of desiring to usurp the functions of the Medical Bureau, and of putting itself forward as a rival of the Medical staff, but it must be evident from what has been already stated, that all the policy and efforts of the Commission have tended, from the first, in a precisely opposite direction. It has labored untiringly, and not without results, to uphold the Medical Bureau, and to obtain it additional powers. Just so far as these efforts have succeeded, have they diminished the prominence and importance of the Commission. Its members have good reason to desire that Government should assume all that part of its work which Government can do, for their duties have proved far more onerous than was anticipated when they were undertaken; they often require the sacrifice of professional and private interests, and at any time less critical than the present they would much exceed the amount of voluntary public service that can reasonably be expected of private citizens.

Other criticisms on the work of the Commission, relating mostly to points of detail, do not require special notice. They are generally founded on some mistake about facts. We all know what swarms of "authentic statements," "reliable reports," and pieces of "direct information" are daily engendered concerning the army, and everybody and everything connected with it, and how utterly untrustworthy they are apt to be. The Commission is the permanent subject of a due proportion of these legends, both commendatory and disparaging.

In estimating the value of the latter, it should be remembered that the work of the Commission necessarily makes it enemies. Medical and other officers who know that their inca-

capacity or indolence has been detected and noted by a relief agent or inspector, naturally think it a meddling and mischievous organization, and are always ready to report, and sometimes to embellish and magnify, every case of failure in its work. Officers of the Medical Staff who stood high on the list, and were expecting speedy promotion and additional rank and emoluments, when Government was prevailed on to fill the higher offices of the Medical Bureau according to ability and not, as before, according to seniority (or, in other words, by selecting the best man instead of the oldest), cannot be expected to admire the Sanitary Commission. Some of them think (very naturally) that it has "ruined the service," and are not disinclined to believe and to endorse any story that tells against it. Many of our most thoughtful and far-sighted people, misinformed as to its aim and policy, suppose it to seek merely the immediate relief of the sick or wounded soldier, at any cost to military self-reliance and discipline, and distrust it accordingly. Thousands of warm-hearted and energetic men and women, diligently laboring for portions of the army through State agencies and local societies, find the Sanitary Commission throwing cold water on their work, because it is not conformed to the system which the Commission holds to be the most economical, the most National, and altogether the best. They cannot help becoming more or less prejudiced against the Commission, which seems thus to discourage and discredit what they rightly feel to be the most unselfish and the most important work of their lives, and they are thus unconsciously predisposed to believe anything they may hear against it.

For a year past the Commission has been under no necessity of appealing to the public for support. It has been sustained during that period mainly by the splendid and spontaneous contributions it received from beyond the Rocky Mountains. These



enabled it to breathe freely, to lay out large and liberal plans, to work for the future as well as for the present, and to expand its system both of prevention and of relief to dimensions commensurate with the wants of the whole Army.

But these great contributions are now nearly exhausted. The Commission receives no money from Government, and has no income from any quarter on which it can rely. The continuance of voluntary public contributions is necessarily too uncertain to justify it in forming or continuing permanent engagements or in undertaking any work that requires considerable time for its execution.\* Its ordinary expenditure is nearly fifty thousand dollars a month. During last July it was more than ninety thousand. Its operations cannot be maintained on their present scale without a reserve fund of at least one hundred thousand. The balance in its treasury has now fallen much below that point, and unless it be speedily and

---

\* Our daily papers are full of paragraphs and advertisements about subscriptions and undertakings in aid of the "Sanitary Commission," which often do not, in fact, aid the Commission at all. The proceeds of the Fairs, Lectures, and other entertainments announced as "for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission," are seldom received by its treasurer. They generally go to the treasury of some one of its branches, and are applied to local expenses, to local "special relief," and to the purchase of supplies and material. They thus relieve the general treasury of the Commission, to some extent, from the necessity of purchasing supplies, but they contribute nothing to any other department of its work. For instance, the great "Sanitary Commission Fair" recently got up with such unprecedented and admirable talent and energy by the loyal people of Chicago, has produced not less than sixty-nine thousand dollars. But it is not expected that any portion of this amount will be received by the central treasury of the Commission. The proposed "Metropolitan Fair," in New York, will be for the benefit of the Commission itself, but months must elapse before its proceeds are received, and the Commission require large sums to sustain it in operation meanwhile.

The distinction between a "Commission" and a "Committee" seems not generally recognised. Committees of patriotic and humane citizens, anxious to do something to promote the sanitary condition of the army, style themselves the "Sanitary Commission of ——" and report their receipts as contributed to "the Sanitary Commission." People are thus led to over-estimate the receipts and under estimate the wants of the U. S. Sanitary Commission—the only organization for army relief commissioned by Government and entitled to that name.



abundantly replenished, it must at once begin winding up its affairs, closing its "homes" and depots, dismissing its agents, and preparing to retire from the field. No reduction of its work to a smaller and less expensive scale is practicable. It must continue to do all it now does, or cease attempting to do anything. For should it be obliged to abandon any part of the ground it now covers, the diminution of its efficiency would be at once perceived, and the public support at once farther diminished. Each successive contraction of its work would produce corresponding contraction of its means, and it would rapidly dwarf and dwindle, inch by inch, till it ceased to be worth sustaining at all. It would be unseemly that a work so noble and so new in history as that which the people has done through the Commission should terminate in lingering decay, and pass through successive stages of weakness to insignificance and extinction. It should rather stop short while still in full vigor, for its existence in decrepitude and with failing energies would bring discredit on the people, and do little to help the Army.

The Commission now asks the country to decide, and that promptly, whether it shall or shall not continue its work. It makes no appeal to public humanity and sympathy, for they are already enlisted in its favor. It declines to stimulate those feelings as it might, most effectively, by dwelling on the pathetic and touching incidents of its work, on the cases of heroic suffering it has relieved, and the brave men who have thanked it for saving them to do further service to the country. It addresses itself not to the sentiment, but to the practical good sense of the community, and asks no support except from those who are satisfied that the country receives a full return in money value for all the country gives to support it. It submits to every man the question whether it has or has not saved the country ten times its cost by what it has done to economize the life, health, and efficiency of the army—whether the continuance of this

work will or will not tend appreciably to diminish the cost and the duration of the war; and whether he will or will not promote his own material interests by doing what he can to sustain it.

In considering these questions, it must be remembered that in all campaigns three or four men die of preventible disease for every one destroyed by the enemy; and also that the death of every soldier is a considerable pecuniary loss to the country, and to each and every one of its citizens.

The amount of this loss is made up of many items—the cost of his enlistment, his pay and his rations, while he was an inefficient recruit, the bounties that must be paid to replace him, and the pension which his death or disability charges on the public; and to these must be added his worth to the nation as a producer, had he survived the war, and returned to the industrial pursuits of civil life. The average money value to the people of each soldier in the service is certainly not less than one thousand dollars.

Men are not among the commodities we buy and sell; but they are bought and sold elsewhere, or have been; and an able-bodied male adult has never been held worth much less than that sum to his owner. A Northern mechanic or farmer is certainly worth as much to the country. The loss of a single soldier by death or disability adds at least that amount to the expenses of the war, and to the burthen it necessarily imposes on every member of the community.

Rigorous economy of the life and health of our soldiers is practically most important, therefore, to every tax-payer, and to every holder of Government Securities. Whether the Sanitary Commission does enough toward this great object to make it worth the people's while to sustain it (at the cost of nearly fifty thousand dollars a month), is the question the people is now asked to consider and decide.

Leaving out of view all its other work, the Commission cer-

tainly saved not less than one thousand lives within forty-eight hours after Antietam. If each of these was worth as much to the country as the average South Carolina field hand to his owner, then the Commission, by its work at this one point, returned to the country more than an equivalent, in money value, for the nine hundred thousand dollars the country has given its Central Treasury during the last two years. But this is only a single incident of one branch of the work it has been doing ever since the war began.

In view of facts like this, the Commission submits the case, without misgiving, to the intelligence of the People. The value of all property throughout the country depends on the success of the National cause, and every property-holder has a personal interest in whatever promotes it. In no way can it be more surely promoted than by retrenchment of the cost of war; and the Commission claims that its efforts to this end have thus far saved the People at least two dollars for every dollar it has been enabled to expend.

It will make no attempt to raise the sum required to keep it in operation through the instrumentalities usually employed for like purposes. If means be freely supplied, as heretofore, the work of the Commission will be kept up, but, if not, it will be abandoned; and, to keep it up, not less than two hundred and fifty thousand dollars must be raised before the 1st of February, 1864.

For the purpose of ascertaining what the People is disposed to give, it is recommended that the several branches of the Commission proceed at once to ascertain, by public meetings, or otherwise, what sum their respective cities will contribute for the general purposes of the Commission, and report the result to its General Secretary Dr. J. Foster Jenkins, No. 823 Broadway, New York.

Those who are satisfied that the work of the Commission is

one not only of mercy and humanity, but of substantial service to the country, and who are able and willing to aid it, will send their contributions to its Treasurer, Geo. T. Strong, No. 68 Wall Street, or 823 Broadway, New York.

By order of the Commission.

HENRY W. BELLOWS,	}	Committee.
WM. H. VAN BUREN,		
WOLCOTT GIBBS,		
C. R. AGNEW,		
SAML. G. HOWE,		
HORACE BINNEY, Jr.,		
J. HUNTINGTON WOLCOTT,		
FAIRMAN ROGERS,		
GEO. T. STRONG,		



## APPENDIX A.

### SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED DURING AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BATTLES AT GETTYSBURG,

**JULY 1st, 2d and 3d, 1863.**

#### *Of Articles of Clothing, etc., viz.:*

Of Drawers, (woolen) 5,310 pairs.....	\$9,292 50
“ “ (cotton) 1,833 pairs.....	1,833 00
“ Shirts, (woolen) 7,158.....	14,316 00
“ “ (cotton) 3,266.....	3,266 00
“ Pillows, 2,114.....	1,268 40
“ Pillow Cases, 264.....	105 60
“ Bed Sacks, 1,630.....	3,463 75
“ Blankets, 1,007.....	3,021 00
“ Sheets, 274.....	274 00
“ Wrappers, 508.....	1,498 60
“ Handkerchiefs, 2,659.....	319 08
“ Stockings, (woolen) 3,560 pairs.....	1,780 00
“ “ (cotton) 2,258 pairs.....	451 60
“ Bed Utensils, 728.....	182 00
“ Towels and Napkins, 10,000.....	*1,500 00
“ Sponges, 2,300.....	230 00
“ Combs, 1,500.....	75 00
“ Buckets, 200.....	60 00
“ Soap, (Castile) 250 pounds.....	50 00
“ Oil Silk, 300 yards.....	225 00
“ Tin Basins, Cups, etc., 7,000.....	*700 00
“ Old Linen, Bandages, etc., 110 barrels.....	1,100 00
“ Water Tanks, 7.....	70 00
“ Water Coolers, 46.....	230 00
“ Bay Rum and Cologne Water, 225 bottles.....	*112 50
Carried forward.....	\$45,624 03

Brought forward.....	\$45,624 03
Of Fans, 3,500.....	145 00
“ Chloride of Lime, 11 barrels.....	99 00
“ Shoes and Slippers, 4,000 pairs.....	*2,400 00
“ Crutches, 1,200.....	480 00
“ Lanthorns, 180.....	90 00
“ Candles, 350 pounds.....	70 00
“ Canvas, 300 square yards.....	360 00
“ Musquito Netting, 648 pieces.....	810 00
“ Paper, 237 quires.....	23 70
“ Pants, Coats, Hats, 189 pieces.....	*96 75
“ Plaster, 16 rolls.....	4 00

*Of Articles of Sustenance, viz.:*

Of Fresh Poultry and Mutton, 11,000 pounds.....	1,540 00
“ “ Butter, 6,430 pounds.....	1,286 00
“ “ Eggs, (chiefly collected for the occasion at farm- houses in Pennsylvania and New Jersey,) 8,500 dozens .....	1,700 00
“ “ Garden Vegetables, 675 bushels.....	337 50
“ “ Berries, 48 bushels.....	72 00
“ “ Bread, 12,900 loaves.....	645 00
“ Ice, 20,000 pounds.....	100 00
“ Concentrated Beef Soup, 3,800 pounds.....	3,800 00
“ “ Milk, 12,500 pounds.....	3,125 00
“ Prepared Farinaceous Food, 7,000 pounds.....	700 00
“ Dried Fruit, 3,500 pounds.....	350 00
“ Jellies and Conserves, 2,000 jars.....	1,000 00
“ Tamarinds, 750 gallons.....	600 00
“ Lemons, 116 boxes.....	580 00
“ Oranges, 46 boxes.....	230 00
“ Coffee, 850 pounds.....	272 00
“ Chocolate, 831 pounds.....	249 30
“ Tea, 426 pounds.....	383 40
“ White Sugar, 6,800 pounds .....	1,156 00
“ Syrups, (Lemon, etc.) 785 bottles.....	596 25
“ Brandy, 1,250 bottles.....	1,250 00
“ Whiskey, 1,168 bottles.....	700 80
“ Wine, 1,148 bottles.....	861 00
Carried forward.....	\$71,736 73

Brought forward.....	\$71,736 73
Of Ale, 600 gallons.....	180 00
“ Biscuit, Crackers, and Rusk, 134 barrels.....	*670 00
“ Preserved Meats, 500 pounds.....	125 00
“ Preserved Fish, 3,600 pounds.....	720 00
“ Pickles, 400 gallons.....	120 00
“ Tobacco, 100 pounds.....	70 00
“ Tobacco Pipes, 1,000.....	5 00
“ Indian Meal, 1,621 pounds.....	40 50
“ Starch, 1,074 pounds.....	75 18
“ Codfish, 3,848 pounds.....	269 36
“ Canned Fruit, 582 cans.....	436 50
“ “ Oysters, 72 cans.....	36 00
“ Brandy Peaches, 303 jars.....	303 00
“ Catsup, 43 jars.....	11 00
“ Vinegar, 24 bottles.....	3 00
“ Jamaica Ginger, 43 jars.....	37 25
Total.....	<u>\$74,838 52</u>

---

\* Estimated value.

## APPENDIX B.

---

While this paper is passing through the press, information is received that a Branch of the U. S. Sanitary Commission has just been organized at Paris, and is entering with energy on its legitimate work of collecting money and supplies from loyal Americans abroad, and from all others who sympathize with us in our National struggle.

The following is an abstract of the official report of its proceedings up to 4th December, instant, transmitted to the Standing Committee in New York :

A meeting of American gentlemen was held at the American Consulate, Paris, November 30th, 1863, for the purpose of organizing a Paris Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission.

The Rev. John McClintock, D.D., was duly appointed President, and Mr. James W. Brooks, Vice-Consul of the United States, Secretary *pro tem*.

An Executive Committee was appointed, consisting of the following named gentlemen :

Rev. John McClintock, D.D., (Pastor of the American Chapel, Paris.)  
 Mr. John Bigelow, U. S. Consul.  
 Mr Chas. S. P. Bowles, Boston.  
 Mr. Edward Brooks, do.  
 Dr. T. W. Evans, Paris.  
 Mr. Robt. M. Mason, Boston.  
 Mr. Geo. T. Richards, Paris.  
 Mr. J. Phalen, New York.  
 Mr. Wm. H. Thomson, New York.  
 Mr. Henry Wood, Boston.

Such Committee to have general supervision of the action of the Paris Branch, subject to the approval of the Central Board of the Commission, with power to fill its own vacancies.



Mr. Geo. T. Richards was appointed Treasurer, and Mr. Wm. B. Bowles Secretary, such appointments to be subject to the approval of the Central Board.

The Secretary was instructed to provide books of subscription, prefaced with a statement of the character and objects of the organization.

The meeting then adjourned.

---

A meeting of the Executive Committee was held at the office of Messrs. J. Munroe & Co., No. Rue de la Paix, Paris.

Present—Rev. John McClintock, D.D., and Messrs. Robt. M. Mason, Wm. S. Thompson, Edward Brooks, Geo. S. Richards. Henry Woods, Charles S. P. Bowles and Wm. Bowles, General Secretary of the Paris Branch of the U. S. Sanitary Commission.

Dr. McClintock was, on motion, duly elected Chairman of the Committee, and Mr. Wm. B. Bowles Secretary.

The minutes of the preliminary meeting was read and approved.

A list of names of gentlemen on whom it was thought best to wait for subscriptions, was submitted and approved.

It was resolved that the Secretary open a correspondence with American Consuls, and with prominent American citizens residing in Europe, with a view to the extension and increased efficiency of this Branch of the Commission.

*Resolved*,—That the title of the Branch be "THE EUROPEAN BRANCH OF THE UNITED STATES SANITARY COMMISSION."

Mr. Wm. S. Thompson offered his name as one of ten to subscribe five thousand francs each for the objects of the European Branch.

Adjourned to meet at the same place 6th December instant, at 3 P. M.

---

The European Branch appears to have established its permanent headquarters at No. 2 Rue Martel, Paris, and to have already raised a considerable amount which it holds subject to the orders of the Commission, and which can be used abroad to very great advantage in the purchase of certain articles of hospital supply.

This creation of a Branch of the Commission among loyal Americans on the other side of the Atlantic is especially gratifying, because it has been wholly spontaneous. It shows that this new work, invented by the American People, and by them practically applied for the first time in

history, through the Sanitary Commission—of supplying an army with an additional staff of Volunteer Commissaries, Quartermasters and Surgeons, working in harmony with its military authorities, and vested with discretionary powers that enable them to do whatever the necessary inflexibility of military regulations obliges Government officials to leave undone—commends itself to the heads and to the hearts of loyal Americans wherever they may be.

This extension of the influence and agencies of the Commission into Europe suggests the mention of another fact of like interest, which may be due to the example the Commission has set, and may prove a material step in the progress of mankind toward the mitigation of the evils incident to war. An "International Conference" of representatives of the several European States met at Geneva last October, and has published a voluminous report of its deliberations and transactions. Its object is to establish a Sanitary Commission for the army of every European Power. It proposes that, in case of war, each army—French, Austrian, Russian, or as the case may be—shall have its staff of Sanitary and Relief Agents, representing an International organization, whose duty it shall be impartially to succor and relieve all the sick and wounded among friends and enemies alike, and whose office shall make their persons sacred and inviolable, and secure them against capture, injury, or interference.













